

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV MARR LE SY PLO
SUBJ: KHALIDI'S VIEWS ON CHTAURA TRUCE AGREEMENT

REF: BEIRUT 3601, BEIRUT 3542

1. EMBOFF HAD CONVERSATION WITH INSTITUTE OF PALESTINE
STUDIES MEMBER WALID KHALIDI JULY 27. KHALIDI MADE
FOLLOWING POINTS RELATING TO CHTAURA TRUCE AGREEMENTS
REPORTED REFTELS.

--PALESTINIAN OFFER TO WITHDRAW FROM CONFRONTATION
LINES IN SOUTHERN LEBANON AND TO ADHERE TO OTHER DETAILS
OF CHTAURA AGREEMENT IS GENUINE. IT REPRESENTS FULL COMMIT-
MENT BY FATAH LEADERSHIP TO ADOPT NEW POLICY AND BRING LEFTIST
PALESTINIAN ELEMENTS ALONG WITH IT.

--TRUCE INITIATIVE IS NOT RESULT OF BID BY ABU IYAD IN
LEAGUE WITH SYRIANS TO OVERTHROW FATAH LEADER ARAFAT.
RATHER, ARAFAT IS INFORMED OF INITIATIVE AND, HAVING BEEN IN
CAIRO OSTENSIBLY TO MEDIATE EGYPTIAN-LIBYAN FLAREUP, HAS
POSITIONED HIMSELF TO LET ABU IYAD ABSORB DAMAGE IF INITIA-
TIVE SHOULD BACKFIRE. TRUCE IS A CALCULATED POLICY SHIFT
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AGREED TO BY TOP ELEMENTS IN FATAH LEADERSHIP AND SYRIAN
GOVERNMENT. (COMMENT: WE WOULD NOT EXPECT KHALIDI TO
INDICATE A SPLIT IN PLO LEADERSHIP, EVEN IF THERE WERE.
END COMMENT.)

--FACTORS UNDERLYING INITIATIVE ARE COMPLEX, INVOLVING
PERSONAL AND POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN PLO LEADERSHIP AND

SYRIAN GOVERNMENT. ABU IYAD IS STRONGEST PROPONENT OF INITIATIVE, BUT SARG HAS BEEN RELUCTANT TO PERMIT ANY MAJOR NON-SYRIAN INITIATIVE TO EMERGE FROM MOSLEM SIDE IN SOUTH LEBANON THAT WOULD IN EFFECT FULFILL SYRIAN AND ARAB SECURITY FORCE DETERRENCE FUNCTION IN SUCH A WAY AS TO DEMONSTRATE EFFICACY OF INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN FORCES OR INEFFICACY OF ASF, AND PRODUCE SYRIAN LOSS OF FACE. DUAL FEARS, ON PALESTINIAN SIDE THAT BEGIN GOVERNMENT MIGHT INTERVENE MILITARILY IN SOUTH LEBANON, ON SYRIAN SIDE THAT BEGIN SEEKING TO TRADE SINAI WITHDRAWAL FOR RETENTION OF GOLAN HEIGHTS--FINALLY DROVE PARTIES TOGETHER. PLO ABLE TO ACHIEVE BREAKTHROUGH IN DAMASCUS MEETINGS EARLIER THIS MONTH AT WHICH JOINT INITIATIVE APPROVED. MAIN LOCAL FACTOR UNDERLYING INITIATIVE IS SATURATION LEBANESE MOSLEM COMMUNITY WITH CONTINUOUS WARFARE AND DISLOCATIONS RENDERING RETURN TO NORMAL LIFE IMPOSSIBLE. POLITICAL EFFECTS OF THIS IN LONG RUN COULD ONLY BE DETRIMENTAL TO RELATIONS BETWEEN PALESTINIANS AND LEBANESE MOSLEMS.

--PROVISIONS OF TRUCE AGREEMENT INCLUDE (A) REDUCTIONS IN RATIO OF ARMED TO UNARMED IN PALESTINIAN CAMPS TO A FIGURE NEAR BUT SOMEWHAT HIGHER THAN SEVEN PER THOUSAND. PLO DOES NOT WISH TO COMMIT ITSELF TO A PRECISE RATIO, AND PARTICULARLY NOT TO THE SEVEN PER THOUSAND FIGURE ORIGINALLY PROPOSED BY NEGOTIATING ADVERSARY SARKIS; (B) HEAVY WEAPONS TO BE GIVEN UP AND PLACED IN ARAB SECURITY FORCE CONTROLLED CONFIDENTIAL

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DEPOTS; (C) PALESTINIAN ARMED STRUGGLE COMMAND (PASC) TO GIVE UP FIVE KEY LOCATIONS OUTSIDE THEIR CAMPS IN PALESTINIAN-DOMINATED SECTORS OF BEIRUT, INCLUDING MAIN PASC DEPOT IN CITE SPORTIVE. THREE OF THESE FIVE LOCATIONS TO PASS UNDER ARAB SECURITY FORCE (ASF) CONTROL AND REMAINING TWO TO BE SECURED BY LEBANESE FORCES; (D) WITHDRAWALS IN SOUTH LEBANON AS REPORTED SEPTELS.

--SOVIET EMBASSY HAS CONVEYED TO PLO SOVIET SUPPORT FOR THE INITIATIVE.

2. COMMENT: KHALIDI IS WELL-INFORMED SOURCE WITH GOOD ACCESS TO MOSLEM, CHRISTIAN, AS WELL AS PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP. HE NOTED THAT INITIATIVE PLACED PALESTINIAN CREDIBILITY AS WELL AS FATAH LEADERSHIP OF PALESTINIAN FACTIONS UNAMBIGUOUSLY ON THE LINE, EXPOSING BOTH TO SERIOUS DAMAGE SHOULD TRUCE FAIL. POTENTIAL FOR DAMAGE TO PALESTINIAN CAUSE TOO GREAT, HE SAID, FOR INITIATIVE TO BE ASSESSED AS A HOAX. THIS NOTWITHSTANDING, KHALIDI'S PROFESSION THAT PALESTINIAN INTEND SURRENDER HEAVY ARMS CANNOT BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT SKEPTICISM.

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